

Partnering for a Better Tomorrow



Society seldom achieves significant change in a short period of time. However, change implemented over a long period of time yields measurable results. This is true for Indiana's environment.

The steps that the Indiana Department of Environmental Management has taken over its 14-year history show the signs of measurable results. Of course, we need to take more steps that lead to more improvements, knowing that our actions today will positively impact Indiana's environment tomorrow. We moved toward tomorrow during the past 12 months by focusing on four priorities.

The belief that a better-educated public makes better environmental decisions anchors our *Communicating Environmental Information* priority. IDEM committed itself to making more environmental information available, with greater convenience to its customers, from a centralized file room located in its central office to a personal computer found in many Hoosier homes.

We committed ourselves to *Reducing Exposure to Toxics*, paying special attention to children. Pound for pound, children eat more food, drink more water and breathe more air than adults. They also need more protection, so we focused on mercury and lead reduction programs in homes, schools and child care centers.

We also realized that the solution to a unique local environmental challenge often lies close to home. We worked with elected officials as well as residents in New Harmony and Aurora to inaugurate *Partnering for Liveable Environments*, a priority where IDEM supports Hoosiers with technical assistance to solve their own environmental problems.

To better serve the people of Indiana, we also turned inward, looking at what we could do toward *Building a Better IDEM*. We stressed to our employees the importance of continuing their education, incorporated a new fiscal management system and walked the talk, working to implement Governor Frank O'Bannon's Greening the Government initiative.

This annual report walks the reader through the priorities on which we have invested so much time. It also provides other useful information about how IDEM is working to make Indiana's environment cleaner and healthier.

When society looks back on our efforts, it will see that the work we committed ourselves to for the past 12 months has profoundly improved the environment in which we live.

Lori F. Kaplan

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Commissioner